

XXXV.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

South African Hawk-Eagles.

SIR,—In my article on *Hieraaëtus ayresi* in 'The Ibis' for April of the present year, I mentioned a specimen in the Durban Museum which I believed, from the description furnished me by the Director, to be referable to this species. I have now, through the kindness of the Director of the Durban Museum, had an opportunity of examining this specimen and, as I expected, it proves to be a fine adult, and is very similar in general colour to the specimen described and figured in my paper, but is rather more heavily marked with black below; the tarsi are, however, very slightly streaked, almost immaculate in fact. There is a small white frontal spot as is often seen in *H. pennatus*; and many new feathers are appearing on the scapulars and wing-coverts, all of which are tipped with white. As I suspected, an error had been made in measuring the wing, which proves to be barely six inches in length, and not $17\frac{3}{4}$ inches as stated in my notes.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

Roberts Heights,
Pretoria.
18 June, 1919.

C. G. FINCH-DAVIES, Lt.
(1st S.A.M.R.).

The Number of Eggs laid by the Blackbird in Spain.

SIR,—In Lieut.-Colonel R. Meinertzhagen's paper on Geographical Distribution and Migration (*antea*, p. 389), reference is made to the question whether the same species, when nesting in tropical countries, lays fewer eggs in the clutch and rears more broods in the season than the same bird in more northern climes. In support of this he quotes Mr. A. Chapman, who states ('Wild Spain,' p. 249) that in Spain the Blackbird as a rule lays but three eggs. A similar

but stronger statement is made by Colonel Verner ('My Life among the Wild Birds,' etc., p. 159): "Curiously enough they never seem to lay more than three eggs in place of the four or five usually found in nests in England. I mention this because I have never seen or heard of a nest with more than three eggs."

The first nest found by me in southern Spain (April 30, 1905) contained four eggs; the second, on May 1, had five nearly fledged young. In 1906 Mr. R. H. Read and I found nests with four eggs on at least two occasions, and in 1907 I have a note of a nest with four eggs. During a visit in the present year to south Spain with Messrs. Lings, Tomkinson, and Peters, we kept careful notes of the contents of nests found, with the following result: Blackbirds' nests found twelve: one with five eggs, five with four eggs, while the remaining six contained either one or two eggs, and were probably incomplete.

The evidence quoted by Lieut.-Col. Meinertzhagen in this case is quite inconclusive, but there are undoubtedly certain species (such as the Wheatear) which lay larger clutches in the high north than with us; while on the other hand the Red-backed Shrike lays on an average more eggs in Corsica than in England.

Favier's statement that the Blackbird breeds three times in the year near Tangier is also inconclusive, as the same thing frequently occurs in the British Isles.

Yours truly,

F. C. R. JOURDAIN.

Appleton Rectory,
Abingdon, Berkshire.
16 July, 1919.

B. O. U. Godman-Salvin Medal Fund.

Subscriptions amounting to £180 5s. 3d. have now been received from Members of the Union towards the proposed Godman-Salvin medal fund, and the Committee are taking active steps to obtain sketches and designs from which to select the most suitable for reproduction.

The following is a complete list of subscribers, 105 in number :—

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A. H. Evans.	E. G. B. Meade-Waldo.	W. J. F. Williamson.
A. Ezra.	J. G. Millais.	H. F. Witherby.

Godman Memorial Fund.

Members may remember that at the Annual Meeting of the Union last March it was unanimously resolved not only that the Union should establish a medal to be called the Godman-Salvin medal, but that it should also take part in

the more general scheme which should take the form of a visible memorial to be placed in the Natural History Museum.

To carry this out an influential committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild and of which, as the representative of the Union, Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker is a member.

With this number of 'The Ibis' is enclosed a leaflet with the complete list of the Committee, an explanation of their proposed plans, and an appeal for subscriptions to carry out the purpose for which they were appointed.

The Hon. Treasurer of the Committee, Mr. C. E. Fagan, I.S.O., Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, S.W. 7, will be very glad to receive contributions from any member of the Union.

International Ornithological Congress.

We hear that American ornithologists are hoping to arrange to hold an International Ornithological Congress in America, probably at New York, in 1921. Up to now five of these international gatherings have been held, at Vienna in 1884, at Budapest in 1891, at Paris in 1900, at London in 1905 under the Presidentship of the late Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, and at Berlin in 1910 under Dr. Reichenow. The meeting for 1915 was to have been held at Sarajevo in Bosnia, and of course did not take place. We hope a good representative body of British ornithologists will be able to attend the meeting in 1921.

The Editor of 'The Ibis.'

The Editor of 'The Ibis' has left England for America and will be absent for about six months. During this time Mr. A. H. Evans (9 Harvey Road, Cambridge), who for so many years was associated with the late Dr. P. L. Sclater as joint-editor, has most kindly consented to act as temporary editor. All communications usually addressed to Mr. Sclater should therefore be sent to Mr. Evans at the address given above.